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June 2, 1975

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LAOS

After a lull of several days, anti-American sentiment resurfaced in Vientiane again over the weekend.

Late Saturday night, an estimated 50 to 60 Pathet Lao police and local teenagers gathered outside the US marine guard residence and demanded the arrest of one of the marines who they alleged had beaten up a Lao youth. The arrival of the US charge, along with one of communist Deputy Prime Minister Phoumi Vongvichit's top aides, helped disperse the crowd.

The marine in question has denied all allegations of misconduct, explaining that the false charges stemmed from efforts by himself and several colleagues to investigate a burglary at a nearby American residence.

Deputy Prime Minister Phoumi initially indicated that he wanted the marine turned over to the city's joint police force for interrogation. After extensive discussion of the matter with Phoumi yesterday, however, the US charge now reports that the police inquiry has been canceled. By mutual agreement, the marine will leave the country as soon as possible.

Phoumi also told the charge that he has directed the joint police to ensure that no "embarrassing incidents" occur during the official visit to Vientiane of US Assistant Secretary Habib. Habib is scheduled to arrive today for talks with Phoumi and Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma over the future US role in Laos. Despite Phoumi's assurances, the possibility of anti-US demonstrations during Habib's stay cannot be discounted.

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The Pathet Lao are continuing efforts to block the exodus of Meo tribesmen from northern Laos.

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Meanwhile Bangkok has to some extent clarified its policy toward the growing numbers of Meo seeking refuge in northern Thailand. According to the secretary general of the Thai National Security Council, Sitthi Sawetsila, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Prime Minister Khukrit Pramot has agreed to resettle the bulk of Meo refugees who have already arrived in Thailand and who cannot safely return to Laos. The US, however, will be requested to pay for the resettlement.

At the same time, Khukrit and other senior Thai officials are said to be "extremely worried" over the possible influx of thousands of additional Meo and believe "very strongly" that this refugee flow must be stopped. In their view, this can only be accomplished by speeding the departure from Thailand of Vang Pao, who they believe is "acting like a magnet" in drawing additional Meo from Laos. Sitthi personally believes that after the situation has "settled down" Vang Pao can, if he chooses, return to Thailand.

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LEBANON

Lebanon's cabinet crisis shows no sign of ending.

Socialist leader Kamal Jumblatt is promoting what he calls a compromise under which representatives of his party and of the right-wing Phalanges Party would be excluded from the government. The new cabinet, he maintains, should be composed of civilians who are not members of parliament or retired military officers.

Phalangist leader Pierre Jumayyil, predictably, has rejected any suggestion that his party be left out of the government. He has won valuable support from former president Camille Shamun, who has declared that his National Liberal Party will not join any government from which the Phalangists have been excluded.

Under ordinary circumstances, prime minister - designate Rashid Karami might be tempted to endorse Jumblatt's proposal, since it would create a weak cabinet that Karami could easily dominate. As a result of the continuing civil unrest, however, Karami almost certainly will continue to seek a solution that can win the active backing of Jumayyil and Shamun; it was their withdrawal of support that forced former prime minister Rashid Sulh to resign last month.

Karami, gambling that time will cool tempers and leave both sides willing to compromise, told newsmen on Saturday that he intends to take his time in forming a government in order that he can avoid any "mistake that might lead to serious repercussions." In the meantime, he is working closely with the outgoing military government to create buffer zones in Beirut, between those areas controlled by the Phalangists and those controlled by the radical fedayeen.

Sporadic shooting continued in Beirut over the weekend, despite somewhat more aggressive patrolling by the joint Lebanese-Palestinian security units. Barricades remain in many parts of the city, and the main road from Beirut to the southern port city of Sidon was closed for several hours.

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NORTH KOREA

North Korean President Kim Il-song is continuing his tour of African and East European capitals, but a Soviet official has said that Moscow is not on Kim's current itinerary.

Kim's trip has thus far had a distinct Third World orientation. Since May 22, he has been welcomed enthusiastically in Romania, Algeria, and Mauritania. Algerian officials expect Kim will arrive back in Algiers today, and there are reports that he will visit Bulgaria and Yugoslavia before heading home.

25X1 In his speeches and interviews, Kim has strongly emphasized the common interests of the small and medium-sized countries, and he roundly attacked the US and UN presence in South Korea. The Algerians, however, report that [] Kim has tried to project a more moderate image, insisting that Pyongyang's policy calls for peaceful reunification and that he is prepared to move slowly toward that end.

Kim's immediate objective probably is to strengthen political support for North Korea in anticipation of the nonaligned conference in Lima this summer and consideration of the Korean question at the UN General Assembly this fall. In this regard, the trip seems a success, but Kim does not appear to have been given much encouragement for more aggressive policies.

A Soviet Foreign Ministry official told a US diplomat on May 27 that Kim will not be coming to Moscow "at this time." He said nothing about a future Kim visit, but a Soviet official in Western Europe has said that planning is under way for a visit by the North Korean leader in late June or early July.

There were indications last month that the Soviets had turned Kim aside. Moscow may have felt a visit by the North Korean leader in the wake of the communist victory in Indochina would be unnecessarily offensive to the US and would raise questions about Soviet support for a more assertive policy by Pyongyang.

Moscow may even have calculated that in view of Peking's reception of Kim, it could gain some points with Washington by turning a cold shoulder to the North Korean.

Moscow's problem was essentially one of timing. Although the Soviets have no great enthusiasm for North Korea's demand for the withdrawal of US troops from the South, they will eventually receive Kim.

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PANAMA

The Torrijos government has placed tough restrictions on the media in an effort to stifle its domestic critics during a crucial period in the canal treaty negotiations.

The crackdown is evidence of the government's growing concern over the impact of recent criticism by certain student groups, business organizations, and communications media. For the past several years, the prohibition of political activity has enabled the government to act largely free from criticism by organized groups. During the last month, however, elements of the business community who have never trusted Torrijos have aggressively attacked the government's economic policies.

Criticism by ultranationalist students is even more worrisome for the administration. Although these anti-government students represent only a small minority of the student population, they have effectively attacked the government's educational policies and treaty negotiation strategy through demonstrations and radio broadcasts. The government, not wanting to use overt repression against the radicals, apparently has decided to rely on pro-Torrijos students to silence this criticism. A group of high-school students, possibly acting on official instructions, recently seized an offending radio station, charging that it was a mouthpiece of "reactionary" businessmen and the CIA. The government's next step may be to turn its student allies loose on the radical youth groups.

Torrijos believes the present period is particularly important for the treaty negotiations, and he fears that any signs of disunity at home may be used by those who claim that his regime does not really represent the Panamanian people. Government spokesmen are almost certain to become more forceful in their attacks on the opposition and to label the government's critics servants of foreign interests who want to sabotage the negotiations and topple Torrijos.

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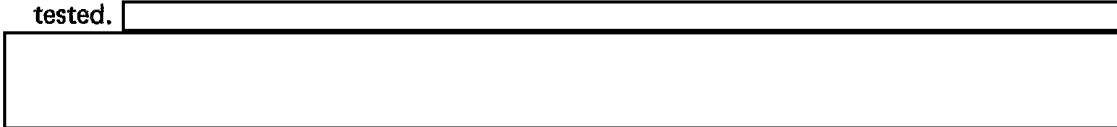
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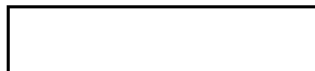
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USSR: The Soviet Union has declared an area in the northern Pacific closed to navigation between June 3 and June 30 because of "carrier rocket impacts." The large size of the closure—a circle with a radius of 130 nautical miles—and the presence of many Soviet monitoring ships suggest that a MIRVed payload will be tested.



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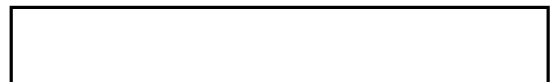
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